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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-sixth year

Identical letters dated 22 March 2011 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As we write this letter, Palestinian civilians across the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, are enduring yet another extremely violent wave of State-sponsored aggression and militia attacks. Since our last correspondence on 16 March 2011 (A/ES-10/513-S/2011/144), Israeli settlers have further escalated their campaign of terror against Palestinian civilians and their villages across the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. At the same time, Israel, the occupying Power, has stepped up its attacks against the besieged Gaza Strip, recently launching the most aggressive aerial bombardment campaign against Gaza since the brutal Israeli military aggression two years ago.

Over the past week, Israeli forces have stepped up the frequency and depth of their incursions into the Gaza Strip. As a result, the Al-Hilu family in Gaza is coping with unimaginable grief and shock caused by the latest barrage of Israeli artillery that targeted a home in the Al-Shoja'iyya neighbourhood east of Gaza City and a nearby soccer field in which children were playing, killing five Palestinian civilians. The dead include 11-year-old Mohammad Jihad Al-Hilu and 16-year-old Yasser Ahed Al-Hilu and 50-year-old Yasser Hamed Al-Hilu. Over a dozen other civilians were also injured in the attack, including four children, some critically. Today, another four Palestinians were killed in an Israeli air strike in the Al-Zeitoun neighbourhood south-east of Gaza.

While the occupying Power employs its military might to sow death and destruction among Palestinians, its support and incitement also continue for the escalating terrorist attacks and intimidation by armed Israeli settler militias against Palestinian civilians in the Occupied West Bank, including East Jerusalem. In this regard, on Monday, 21 March 2011, an Israeli settler fired at residents of Beit Ummar, south of Al-Khalil (Hebron), while Israeli occupying forces stationed in the village stood idly by and watched. That attack resulted in the critical injury of 59-year-old Mohammad Abu Safieh and the injury of Iyad Al-Zaaqiq. Earlier yesterday, settlers stabbed and wounded another Palestinian civilian in Al-Khalil (Hebron). Simultaneously, this terrorist campaign, which continues with impunity,

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has aimed at destroying Palestinian livelihoods. In this regard, today Israeli settlers from the illegal settlement of "Itamar" ravaged fields in the nearby village of Aqraba, uprooting and damaging recently planted tree saplings and destroying irrigation water tanks.

This escalation of settler attacks is clearly organized and deliberate and constitutes the implementation of earlier threats made by the settlers. These extremist settlers have received encouragement from Israeli political figures and government officials, who have launched a campaign of racist incitement against Palestinians, and the tacit support of the Israeli Government, whose armed forces guard these settler militias as they commit their crimes against the defenceless Palestinian civilian population.

We have repeatedly brought to your attention the grave violations committed by Israel, the occupying Power, and the settlers it has illegally and deliberately transferred to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. These attacks and campaigns of terror pose a direct threat to the goals set by the international community with regard to reaching a peaceful resolution to the conflict in the region. We recall in this regard the international consensus on the illegality of Israeli settlements and the detrimental effect of their continued construction and expansion on the prospects for realizing peace and security in the region.

The international community, represented by the United Nations, has a direct legal and moral responsibility to safeguard the protection of Palestinian civilians as well as to ensure that all parties adhere to their responsibilities, as outlined in relevant United Nations resolutions. The Security Council, in specific, must uphold its duties in this regard. It is imperative for the international community to assume its responsibilities and, inter alia, ensure that Palestinian civilians are granted the protection accorded to all civilians in situations of armed conflict. In this regard, and given the ongoing escalation, the provision of international protection to Palestinian civilians is an issue of crucial importance that should be seriously considered, supported and facilitated before the violence escalates any further, with all its grave consequences.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 386 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. Those letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 16 March 2011 (A/ES-10/513-S/2011/144), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations